



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield  
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**

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[www.myfcc.info](http://www.myfcc.info)

All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist Olivia

Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**THE SEASON OF CREATION + WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY + OCTOBER 1, 2023**

**Chimes and Prelude**

**Welcome and Greeting**

**Centering in the Spirit of Creation**

Blessed are you, Creator God, for in Christ, the living water, you have blessed us and transformed us.

**Grant that as we are sprinkled with this water  
we will be refreshed by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

May we draw water from the springs of salvation.

**and continue to walk together in the new life we received in baptism.**

**Musical Response**

*Water River Spirit Grace*

CH366

**Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer**

Hear these words from the Gospel according to Matthew: "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

When in this past week have we not followed the path of righteousness? When have we found it to change our minds when required to?

*Silence*

**God of strange authority, whose questions challenge the powers of this world: teach us to look beyond appearance, to see your kingly rule emptying itself in cross-stretched arms, through Jesus Christ, the only Lord, the humble Servant.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Shakespeare. Prayers for an Inclusive Church

**Song of Praise***Gloria*

Christopher Grundy

Glo - ry to the Cre - a - tor, and the Christ, and the Spir - it so near, as it  
 9  
 was from the start so it shall be for - ev - er one God, al - ways here.

**Christian Scripture**

Philippians 2:1-13

*As part of a call for harmony rather than seeking the congregation's individual self interests alone, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that tells of the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross.*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure.

**Psalter**Psalm 78: *The Lord Gave Them Bread From Heaven* Francesca LaRosa

The Lord gave them bread from hea - ven. The Lord gave them bread from hea - ven.

**Hebrew Scripture**

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

**Reflection**

Rev. Joseph Blotz

## Call to Prayer

## Stepping In

Christopher Grundy

There is a prayer like a wide ri-ver it ne-ver ends,  
7 does not be - gin... a - round the world  
11 its al - ways flow-ing and we are step-ping in we are step-ping in.

## Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire us all with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us.

Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged.

Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority.

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely.

Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community; make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors.

Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death.

*Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is most comfortable for you.*

*The following are offered as examples...*

**Our Father/Mother/Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts/sins/trespasses**

**as we forgive our debtors/those who sin/trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## Musical Offering

## Pan De Vida

Bob Hurd

Cheryl Chase and Laurel Thurman

*Financial offerings may be placed in the collection plates,*

*mailed to: First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC. Box 36. Mansfield Center, CT 06250, or given online at*

[www.myfcc.info](http://www.myfcc.info)

**Doxology**

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise God all crea - tures here be low; Praise  
 5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Holy God, may the gifts here given help meet the needs of the world. Amen.**

**The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

*Here We Remember*

Marty Haugen

God of all cre - a - tion, come cre - ate in us a - new  
 God of flood and fi - re, come and move in us a - new  
 God who raised up Je - sus, come and rise us up a - new  
 Ev' - ry time we gath - er for the shar - ing in the feast  
 5 Keep is ua a vi - sion of a world where all is new,  
 so in grief and in e - la - tion we may  
 so that tru - er, deep - er, high - er we may  
 in our death and res - ur - rec - tion we may  
 we em - brace you ho - ly vis - ion of all  
 8 may your reign be - gin with - in us, may we  
 learn to live the sto - ry with you.  
 learn to live the sto - ry with you.  
 learn to live the sto - ry with you.  
 hum - man - kind un - it - ed in peace.  
 12 true - ly live the sto - ry with you.

A - men! A - le - lu - ia!  
 5 A - men, A - men!  
 9 A - men! Come Lord Je - sus!  
 13 A - men, A - men; A - men!

**Benediction and Postlude**

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**The Week Ahead...**

**Monday, October 2**

10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living Center  
7-9pm Take Note

**Tuesday, October 3**

10:30 First Church leads Worship at MCNR

**Wednesday, October 4**

1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall

**Thursday, October 5**

9:30 Sewing and Service in Fellowship Hall 12:15pm Contemplative Communion in Yellow Office

**Sunday, October 9**

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle